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FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0071
INFO RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 0284
RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS 1287
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1217
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1415
RUEHAB/AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN 0268
RUEHRN/USMISSION UN ROME
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA

UNCLAS COTONOU 000963

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DEPT FOR AF/W DBANKS AND G/AIAG MJONES
DEPT PLEASE PASS USAID FOR MHARVEY, GGREER, GBERTOLIN, NSTUDZINSKI
AND JBORRAZZO
USDA FOR FAS MROSENBLUM
CDC FOR INFLUENZA DIVISION DGROSS AND CDUGGAR
DAKAR FOR USDA/APHIS CFRENCH AND RCOLY AND USAID
ROME FOR SPANOS
ABIDJAN FOR CDC

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (P A S S I N G I N S T R U C T I O N S C H A N G E D)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: EAGR TBIO KFLU BN

SUBJECT: H5N1 UPDATE 1: GOB MEETS WITH DONORS

REF: (A) COTONOU 950 (B) COTONOU 948 (C) COTONOU 932

¶1. Summary: The GOB met with donor representatives on December 19 to review the GOB's avian influenza action plan. The plan, which covers the next six months, now assumes that there will be 8 outbreaks. The GOB asked the donors to prepare their contributions before the GOB makes a decision on its contribution. Donors insisted the GOB begin providing compensation to farmers who lose their poultry to culling. The GOB reported another AI outbreak, confirmed by front line tests, in Akpro-Misserete on December 18. End Summary.

¶2. The meeting between the GOB and donors was attended by Roger Dovonou, the GOB's Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Health Kssil Tchalla as well as key officials from each Ministry including the Director of Livestock and the National Director of Health. On the donors' side, representatives from UNICEF, WHO, FAO, UNDP and USAID attended the meeting.

¶3. The GOB's contingency plan to contain AI outbreaks during the next six months was presented. The plan covers four key points with the following budget needs identified: a) the animal health (\$1,620,000); b) human health (\$83,000); c) communication (\$112,000); and d) coordination (\$75,000); for a total of \$1,883,000. The donors who have announced their contribution are: African Development Bank: \$128,000; FAO: \$62,000 and UNICEF: \$67,000. After these contributions the remaining funding gap for the AI contingency plan is \$1.4 million.

¶4. The Minister of Health indicated Benin faces a grave crisis given the impact the AI outbreaks will have on the economy. The Minister of Agriculture stated that the GOB wanted the donor community to study the plan and see what they can do to help before the GOB provides its own contribution. The GOB's veterinary officials now anticipate a total of eight outbreaks during the next six months.

¶5. Donors presented what they have done since last year to assist the GOB to prepare an appropriate response to potential AI

outbreaks. UNICEF indicated that they will support the communication plan. WHO and FAO will provide technical assistance. The USAID representative reminded the GOB of the \$70,000 worth of AI commodities handed-over to the Minister of Agriculture in August 2007 by the Ambassador. He also indicated that USAID may support the communication plan using expertise and resources under the AED/STOP AI project based in Dakar, to complement UNICEF's contribution in this area. He informed the donors and GOB that USDA is currently shipping test kits to Cotonou. The USAID representative also indicated the USG might provide sample collection boxes and that CDC staff based in Abidjan are ready to provide training to veterinary technicians.

¶6. Donors insisted on the need to do something to compensate farmers who will lose hundreds or thousands of birds. The Director of Livestock mentioned that there is resistance among affected farmers with regards to culling the birds. The Minister of Health indicated that culling birds should not be negotiable and the GOB should be ready to use the army if necessary.

¶7. Both Ministers will give a press conference sponsored by WHO this evening. The purpose is to inform the public about what the GOB is doing and planning to do to contain the AI outbreaks. The Minister of Health will also provide information on the human side of the AI outbreaks.

¶8. Two new AI outbreaks were identified in Akpro-Misserete, a town in eastern Benin not far from the site of the first outbreak (Ref C) on December 18. A first line test performed by the GOB was positive for AI. Additionally, the GOB culled 7,000 birds in Adjarra, the site of the first outbreak (Ref C), on December 19 and provided compensation to the farmers of the culled birds.

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